

The Preposition

3c. A **preposition** is a word that shows the relationship of a noun or pronoun, called the **object of the preposition**, to another word.

A preposition that consists of more than one word is called a **compound preposition**.

EXAMPLES The leader **of** the scout troop led the scouts **out of** the woods. [*Troop* is the object of the preposition *of*, and *woods* is the object of the compound preposition *out of*.]

EXERCISE A Underline the prepositions in the following sentences.

Example 1. Before the hike, the scouts checked the supplies in their backpacks.

1. The scout troop went on a hike.
2. They climbed to the top of Mount Milligan.
3. The climb up the mountain was long and difficult.
4. They crossed over a stream and under fallen trees.
5. During the hike a few scouts went off the trail.
6. Boulders had fallen on the trail from a cliff.
7. They went either around the fallen rocks or between them.
8. There is a great deal of wildlife on the ground and under the brush.
9. On account of snakes, hikers should stay on the trail at all times.
10. The climb down the mountain took them in front of the lodge.

EXERCISE B Underline the compound preposition in each of the following sentences. Then, circle the object of the preposition.

Example 1. Lars and I decided to go to the library instead of the bookstore.

11. We found the biographies next to the mysteries.
12. The seasonal books were in front of them.
13. According to Mr. Wu, some books were not seasonal.
14. They were there because of a space problem.
15. I borrowed the Sue Grafton mystery in spite of its torn cover.
16. A bird book was the only book I liked aside from that.
17. I did not check out the World Series history on account of Lars.
18. Lars checked out that sports book along with a poetry collection.
19. As of last Friday, I had read ten books this month alone.
20. I read Richard Peck's latest novel in addition to Barbara Kingsolver's first book.

Prepositional Phrases

3c. A **preposition** is a word that shows the relationship of a noun or pronoun, called the **object of the preposition**, to another word.

All together, the preposition, its object, and any modifiers of the object are called a **prepositional phrase**.

EXAMPLE Which flowers grow best **in this sandy soil**? [The prepositional phrase consists of the preposition *in*, the object *soil*, and the adjectives *this* and *sandy*.]

Do not confuse a prepositional phrase that begins with *to* (*to the game, to me*) with an infinitive that begins with *to* (*to read, to be heard*).

EXERCISE A For each of the following sentences, underline the prepositional phrase.

Example 1. Maya Angelou was born in St. Louis, Missouri.

1. Maya Angelou grew up in rural Arkansas.
2. Her career began with dance and drama.
3. Dr. Angelou is fluent in several languages.
4. Audiences throughout the United States have enjoyed Dr. Angelou's lectures.
5. Maya Angelou has also lectured in several foreign countries.
6. Dr. Angelou lived in Cairo, Egypt.
7. Dr. Angelou has also lived and taught in Ghana.
8. In 1969, Maya Angelou wrote an autobiographical novel.
9. She has made several appearances on television.
10. Dr. Maya Angelou's great works are respected around the world.

EXERCISE B For each of the following sentences, circle the preposition and underline the object of the preposition.

Example 1. Please don't run in the hallway.

11. This film takes place during the Depression.
12. I found my baseball glove underneath the bed.
13. In spite of the rain the band continued playing.
14. Everybody ran five laps around the track.
15. Is Santa Monica near the beach?

Preposition or Adverb?

Some words may be used as both prepositions and adverbs. To tell a preposition from an adverb, remember that a preposition always has a noun or pronoun as an object.

PREPOSITION We walked **around** the new civic center for several hours. [*Center* is the object of *around*.]

ADVERB As we walked **around**, we saw many unique exhibits. [*Around* modifies the verb *walked*, telling *where*.]

EXERCISE Above the underlined word in each sentence, write *PREP* if the underlined word is a *preposition* or write *ADV* if the underlined word is an *adverb*.

Example 1. Would you like to come ^{ADV} inside?

1. From atop the mountain, we looked below and saw the green fields.
2. The cat was sleeping under the blanket.
3. She crawled inside the box.
4. When they heard the noise, they began to look about.
5. Will the children be playing outside today?
6. The family lives near the lake.
7. The squirrel was frightened and ran off.
8. He wants to travel around the world.
9. We will wait until the prices go down.
10. Did you see the robin perched on the branch?
11. Come along, children.
12. Tobias ran down the stairs.
13. I fed the ducks that were crowded along the shore.
14. As soon as we reached the boat, we climbed aboard.
15. I had never traveled aboard a spaceship before.
16. Besides the time I went to New Delhi, I hadn't ever flown.
17. The airplane made a humming sound as it zoomed off the runway.
18. During the flight, I was served fruit.
19. A cluster of restless creatures murmured nearby.
20. Below, my classmates were probably doing grammar exercises.